



USEU SNAPSHOTS

WORKING TOGETHER, SHARING INTERESTS

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EU High Representative Javier Solana and U.S. Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke (photo: Council of the EU)

Holbrooke and Solana Discuss Afghanistan and Pakistan

Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. Special Envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, met with EU High Representative Javier Solana July 28, during a recent visit to Brussels. They discussed recent developments in the region and in particular the upcoming elections in Afghanistan. They also exchanged views on the situation in Pakistan and the Swat Valley refugee crisis.

Mr. Holbrooke reaffirmed the importance of U.S.-EU cooperation in both countries. He also highlighted the EU's election monitoring mission in Afghanistan, and the work of the EU in addressing the humanitarian crisis in the Swat Valley.

Slovenia: Bilateral Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance Agreements

On July 29, 2009, in Washington DC, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Foreign Minister Samuel Zbogar of Slovenia signed the Protocols of Exchange of Instruments of Ratification of the 2005 Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance Agreements between Slovenia and the United States.

In 2003, the United States and the European Union signed historic agreements streamlining and modernizing transatlantic judicial and law enforcement cooperation in the areas of extradition (apprehending and returning fugitives for prosecution) and mutual legal assistance (obtaining evidence for judicial proceedings). The United States subsequently signed bilateral instruments with all EU member states, including Slovenia in 2005, to put into effect the changes agreed in the overarching U.S.-EU agreements. In the fall of 2008, the U.S. Senate gave advice and consent to the entire set of agreements. More than two-thirds of the Member States have now of exchanged instruments of ratification with the U.S. The remaining exchanges will take place in the next two months in order that the final exchange – between the U.S. and the EU – might proceed at the end of October. The U.S.-EU and the separate bilateral agreements will all enter into force early in 2010, and the police and prosecutors on both sides of the Atlantic will be able to increase the effectiveness of their work together.



Foreign Minister Samuel Zbogar and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton (photo: DOS)

U.S.-EU Cooperation in the Skies

On July 10, at TSA's Brussels office, the Transportation Security Administration hosted a conference on Insider Threats to Aviation Security with participation from a wide range of U.S. and European civil aviation authorities. Following welcome remarks from USEU's Charge d'Affaires Christopher Murray, DG-TREN's Zoltan Kazatsay, and TSA's John Halinski, there was a series of interactive presentations on the type of threats and U.S. and European initiatives to identify, manage, and mitigate vulnerabilities. The afternoon breakout sessions, co-chaired by U.S. and European counterparts, on Information Sharing, Background Checks and Vetting, and Terrorist Exploitation of Criminal Activity triggered a useful exchange of information and ideas. The overall conclusion was that the cooperative dialog should continue and another similar seminar would be helpful.



John Halsinki, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Global Strategies, Transportation Security Administration (Photo: TSA)

U.S. Food and Drug Commissioner: Harmonizing for Consumers' Safety



Commissioner Hamburg, Constant Brand (AP) and Stanley Pignal (FT) (Photo: USEU)

Recently-appointed Commissioner Margaret Hamburg of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration spoke to Brussels-based press, highlighting the ongoing cooperation between the FDA and its European counterparts, and emphasizing the need for working even more closely as new technologies develop. The U.S. and the EU have common strategies and should share the burden of responsibility for food safety, for example, as we import from around the globe. "The more we harmonize, the more industry does not have to address multiple standards, and the more consumers can be assured of safety," she said. The U.S. Mission to the EU organized the press briefing July 16 to give Dr. Hamburg an opportunity to explain the FDA's role in the U.S., in Europe and worldwide, and its new international offices including the one in Brussels.

Interns and Stagiaires Network

The U.S. Mission to the EU organized a Networking Happy Hour for European Union stagiaires and American interns on July 23. Almost 200 participants from 25 different nations represented 20 of the 27 EU member states, Ecuador, the Ivory Coast, Tunisia, Egypt and the United States. The American interns have spent the summer working at the U.S. Missions to the EU and to NATO and at the U.S. Embassy to Belgium. Over 100 of the young networkers have joined the "US-EU: Transatlantic Talk" Facebook group, and some are already working together on joint projects.



U.S. Mission intern Cora Sprinkle (center), with EU stagiaires at Happy Hour

U.S.-EU Regulatory Cooperation Forum with Public Stakeholders

EU and U.S. officials covered a packed agenda during a well-attended High-Level Regulatory Cooperation Forum (HLRCF) in Brussels on July 24. The European Commission hosted this, the sixth HLRCF, gathering regulators from both sides of the Atlantic to discuss regulatory cooperation, including new ideas and advances, and to update private stakeholders on joint progress. Presenters noted progress on issues such as risk assessment, standards, and import safety, and examined regulatory issues around energy technology cooperation and nanotechnology development. In the afternoon, Business Europe hosted a public stakeholder session featuring panel discussions on energy efficiency, counterfeiting and consumer protection. This was the first Forum involving Obama administration officials. The U.S. delegation from Washington, led by Michael Fitzpatrick, Associate Administrator for OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), was joined by 12 U.S. Mission officials for discussions with over 25 European Commission officials, led by Enterprise Director General Heinz Zourek.

Justice and Home Affairs Joint Meeting

The Swedish Presidency of the European Union hosted a U.S.-EU Senior Level meeting on Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) in Stockholm on July 9-10. Senior representatives from the U.S. Departments of Justice, Homeland Security and State and their European counterparts met to plan the transatlantic law enforcement, terrorism, and migration agenda for the coming six months. Over the course of the coming months and in addition to other important collaboration, the US and EU will convene an experts seminar on countering terrorist uses of explosives and radicalization in prisons, and coordinate technical assistance to third countries. American and European experts will also continue exchanges and collaborate on enforcement attacking international child predators and child pornography over the Internet. At the same time, they will work toward a mutually binding international agreement on the exchange of law enforcement information which protects the personal identifying information of European and American citizens. The Attorney General and Secretary of Homeland Security will host EU ministers in Washington DC on October 27-28 at a meeting to review progress and direct future cooperation.



U.S. and EU Senior representatives at JHA meeting
(Photo: EU)